



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

New Hampshire State Office

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NEWS RELEASE

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Federal Financial Assistance Available to New Hampshire Organic Farmers Under the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill)

Article announces continuous program sign-up and upcoming application evaluation date for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Organics Initiative; explains program, offers next steps for interested reader

DURHAM, NH (April 17, 2011) – USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Dave White recently announced another funding opportunity for certified organic producers and those transitioning to organic production to implement resource conservation practices on their agricultural operations.

While applications are accepted on a continuous basis, the ranking cut-off date for this application period is **May 20, 2011**. Producers interested in applying for EQIP Organic Initiative funding must submit applications through their local NRCS Service Center. Applications for all Farm Bill programs, including the EQIP Organics program may be submitted at any time year-round; however, there are certain application-evaluation cut-off dates like this one. If you miss an evaluation cut-off date, your application may be retained, at your request, and reviewed for the next cut-off date. **In order for your application to be considered for funding, landowners/operators must submit a complete application and have cleared all landowner eligibility requirements to be considered in each evaluation round. If your landowner eligibility has not yet been cleared by USDA, you are strongly advised to get your landowner eligibility documentation submitted to your USDA Service Center as soon as possible (ASAP), because it may take several weeks to clear eligibility in order for your application to be considered.**

"Organic growers continue to express interest in program support to implement conservation practices that help us to win the future," Chief White said. "This additional opportunity will allow more producers to get assistance in protecting the natural resources on their land and creating conditions that help foster organic production."

Fiscal year 2011 marks the third year of USDA's Organic Initiative. Up to \$50 million nationwide is available this year to help producers plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns in ways that are consistent with organic production. For example, conservation practices include planting cover crops, establishing integrated pest management plans, constructing seasonal high tunnels, or implementing nutrient management systems consistent with organic certification standards.

Eligible producers include those certified through USDA's [National Organic Program](#), those transitioning to certified organic production, and those who meet organic standards but are exempt from certification because their gross annual organic sales are less than \$5,000.

Organic Initiative funding is provided through NRCS' [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP), a

voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. The 2008 Farm Bill provided assistance specifically for organic farm operations and those converting to organic production.

Under EQIP Organic Initiative contracts, NRCS provides financial payments and technical assistance to help producers implement conservation measures in keeping with organic production. Beginning, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged producers may obtain additional assistance. The 2008 Farm Bill limits EQIP payments for organic operations to \$20,000 per year per person or legal entity, with a maximum total of \$80,000 over six years.

The 2008 Farm Bill provides higher payments for land owners who qualify as beginning farmers, limited resource producers, or who are “socially disadvantaged” because they belong to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice. Such landowners can receive up to 90 percent of the costs associated with planning and implementing conservation measures and up to 30 percent of expected costs may be provided in advance.

NRCS has [offices](#) in Concord, Conway, Epping, Lancaster, Milford, Orford, and Walpole, which work with local conservation districts and other partners to serve farmers and landowners throughout the state. Office telephone numbers are:

Concord:	603-223-6023
Conway:	603-447-2771
Epping:	603-679-1587
Lancaster:	603-788-4651
Milford:	603-673-2409
Orford:	603-353-4651
Walpole:	603-756-2988

Contact your local office for more information. General program information is available on the NRCS New Hampshire website at www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov.

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